

L
F1028 Rather (17.) ^{Schoolmaster abroad, paid} Atwell
1849 53 AN ADDRESS

TO THE
PROTESTANT INHABITANTS OF CANADA

ON THE
DANGEROUS CHARACTER

OF
THE EDUCATION ACT OF 1846,

AND
THE AMENDMENTS PROPOSED THERETO BY THE SUPERINTEN-
DENT OF EDUCATION FOR C. E., TO BE SUBMITTED TO
THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE DURING THE
SESSION OF 1849.

By Mr. Dutton

"Awake! arise! or be for ever fallen!"

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY J. C. BECKET, 211, ST. PAUL STREET.

MDCCCXLIX.

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PROTESTANT INHABITANTS OF CANADA

DANGEROUS CHARACTER

THE EDUCATION ACT OF 1846

VERSION OF 1846

MONTREAL

PRINTED BY C. BARKER, 211 ST. PAUL STREET

MONTREAL

particular scientific philosophy cannot come to a conclusion as to what general system of instruction and discipline we are to submit to the children of the mass of our population in order to prepare them for the discharge of the duties of citizenship and the maintenance of the rights of the citizen.

PROTESTANT INHABITANTS OF THE PROVINCE OF CANADA.

TO THE
FELLOW-CITIZENS.

FELLOW-CITIZENS.—The cause of Education in this Province, which the lately published Report of the Superintendent has again brought before you, previous to its re-discussion in the Provincial Assembly, is of so great importance, and of such vital consequence to the civil and religious liberties—to the general well-being, and to the future prosperity of its inhabitants, that I reluctantly, with your permission, enter upon a notice of it with a few remarks, but under a deep conviction of the inability of any individual to do full justice to its merits, and so to discuss it as to obtain what is most desirable in reference to it—the united effort of all parties for its efficient promotion, and yet, under a persuasion that it is one from which no true philanthropist, or patriot, can withhold his judgment, or the opinion which experience has enabled him to form upon it, however otherwise incompetent he may be, without incurring the guilt of failing to aid his country in the hour of need. It would appear, on a superficial view, an anomaly in the history of this enlightened age, that, while the ancient Persians, Spartans, Athenians and Romans could agree upon one national system of Education for their youth, we, with all the aid of augmented knowledge, widely diffused literature, and comparatively

perfected scientific philosophy, cannot come to a conclusion as to what general system of instruction and discipline we are to commit the children of the mass of our population, in order to prepare them for the discharge of the duties of faithful and industrious citizens. There is, however, this consideration, in mitigation of our political delinquency, which, perhaps, in part apologises for the apparent inconsistency of the present generation. The barbarous character of the ages and nations referred to disposed them to regard the splendour of their victories, and the achievements of their prowess in arms, as the main objects of national ambition; so that the direction of the training and education of youth tended, by unanimous consent, to the preparation of the physical powers by athletic exercises, and the firing of the soul by traditional and declamatory rehearsal of the exploits of their ancestors, and national gods for victorious demonstration of their national superiority, in the day of personal and united conflict. The circumstance, also, of so large a portion of the population, notwithstanding their favourable position, being in a state of complete ignorance and comparative bondage, left the choice to their chiefs and the priests, who were comparatively few in number, while their decisions influenced and affected the whole nation. But the benign influence of Christianity having given the current of public favour a bent in the direction of the peaceful pursuits of trade and commerce, and the more general diffusion of knowledge, by means of the art of printing, having thrown a flood of light upon the public mind, and thereby amazingly increased the number of persons competent to form a judgment upon national and cosmopolitan affairs, while a severe contest has been excited, and is still maintained, as to what is the true basis of national prosperity, and what is true Christianity, it is not surprising, that while the education of youth is felt to be of as great, nay, of greater importance to the State, than it ever was amongst the ancients, and while the facilities for its promotion are most abundantly increased, there should, at the same time, be found such a mass of discordant elements, to prevent an united national effort

to provide sufficient education and training, to enable every youth to fill any, or all those stations in society, in which he may be called to move, with credit to himself, and with enlarged benefit to his country.

The national benefits accruing to the ancients, however, according to their views, from their systems of education, the efforts for accomplishing them which they made, and the facility with which they carried them into effect, ought to stimulate the inhabitants of this free and enlightened age and country, to expedite the solution of the question now before them, and to place it on a rational, permanent, and actively useful basis, that the world, with this Province, may, as speedily as possible, derive the benefits it is so eminently calculated to confer. Having the advantage of so much experience in the success and failure of other countries before them, together with the causes, which, in the one case, have operated to hinder, and in the other, to facilitate the progress of Education, there would appear no good reason, were the question entertained with candour and good faith, apart from political intrigue, and sectarian bigotry, why it should not be speedily settled.

The principal hinderance to the settlement of the question in Europe, is evidently the power and influence of a Hierarchy and Religious Establishment connected with the State. The matter of Education in those countries has been either wholly, or in great part, confided to the Priesthood, from an erroneous impression (the lurking penumbra of the occultation of the dark ages) that they, by consequence, were in possession of the largest amount of knowledge, and the requisite skill to convey instruction, who, confining this principally to dogmas, to creeds, and to metaphysical subtleties and disquisitions, connected with polemic divinity, or ecclesiastical policy, and anxious mainly to maintain the political predominance of their order, have forgotten or overlooked the wants of the mass of the people, consisting in an education to qualify them for the ordinary pursuits of common life, by acquaintance with the elements of science connected with the arts and manufac-

tures, through the ordinary channels of reading, writing, and numbers.

The efforts of National Councils had been confined to the education of the rich and noble, while the mass of the population were left to procure the prize, as best they could, from the casual assistance of private devotedness, until sympathizing with the ignorance, depravity, and wretchedness of the children of the working class, the philanthropic Raikes gathered them together to receive that, on the Sabbath, which their country denied them during the week. His example and success, doubtless, roused the country to perceive the benefits of popular education, but still its efforts were confined to a narrow circle of private benevolence, until Lancaster demonstrated the facility and economy with which large numbers of children might receive the benefits of common English education; and Dr. Bell followed in a modification of the system to the purposes of education in India. In some cases, despotic governments, which, when the will of the Chief Ruler is guided by an enlightened mind, and a benevolent, patriotic heart, can accomplish National reforms in much less time, and sometimes with more effect, than those enjoying a greater share of liberty, established at once systems of National Education, from their plans and suggestions, which have conferred great National benefits. Still the great mass of the people were kept in a comparative state of ignorance, dependent, in England, either upon partial National grants, to favour the claims of the Hierarchy, and political Corporations, or upon the benevolence of private individuals, until the British Reform Bill transferred the purse-strings of Corporate Bodies, and the National Funds, to the management of persons more fully representing the wishes of the people. The success which had attended the independent efforts of philanthropy, and the fact that, by consequence, great numbers of young persons had thrown off the rusty prejudices by which they had been trammelled and the ignorance under which they had groaned, in the mean time, had roused the attention of a jealous State Priesthood, who clearly perceived they must do something to connect themselves with Educa-

tion, or their whole system would fall to the ground. This, therefore, was the signal for a dreadful conflict, which continued to this day. One State Religion claimed a monopoly of popular Education; another claimed an absolute interference with the elements of instruction, and both concurred to endeavour to throw out the independent parties who, before, had been silently but diligently engaged in doing the work. As is often the consequence, however, in similar cases, the struggles of rivals benefit the people at large—so it was in this case; each rival State Church, disdaining surrender, and obstinately bent upon gaining her point, quitted the field and established Education on her own plan—with her own means—leaving those really bent upon educating the people to carry out their philanthropic purposes with the elements furnished them by the Committee of Education in Ireland, and in England, through Corporate funds or by private contributions.

The general question has been several times since mooted in the Imperial Parliament, and though it has in some respects changed its aspect, and presented new phases, in its main features it remains the same, and is, virtually, as unsettled as ever; nor can it by any means be settled on a national basis, where a State Church is continued, or allowed interference under any government deriving part of its power from the people. Of this France is an instance; the late revolution in which may, perhaps, be remotely traced to this very circumstance—the interference of the Priesthood, favored by the executive, with national education. The people of the United States have had the firmness, and the sagacity, to save themselves from this impediment, and have been thus enabled to establish a general system of popular education by a light property assessment, increased in New York by a voluntary additional rate, which generally works well, and ensures to every individual citizen, or stranger, a good elementary education, and in many cases considerably more. Attempts have indeed been made, insidiously, to rob them of this advantage, by some of the State Churches, which, even there, are struggling for supremacy, and hoping through the ballot

good

2y
11
box to prevail upon the free government of the United States to saddle themselves with the incubus of a State Hierarchy: but the people of those States have sagacity enough to perceive the design, and have wisely, and with a firmness which does them the highest honor, resisted the effort to oblige them to part with that which they consider a principal element in the education of youth—the use of the Holy Bible, as a reading book in the schools. They have nobly declared; “although we have no State religion, we are a Christian nation—the Bible is the basis on which Christianity and national morals rest; we will, therefore, not withhold the Bible from our youth, but teach them to read its precepts.” While they remain a nation may they be of the same mind, and be guided by the same principles!

In this province we have no State religion, every denomination being gubernamentally on an equal footing, and therefore, there should be nothing to prevent an amicable, a proper, and a practical settlement of the question, as far as it is concerned, unless that fatal current, which appears to undermine all the efforts of the philanthropist for its good, be still permitted to exercise its power, and submerge the best hopes of all who dwell within its boundary.

Independent, however, of these, and other political obstacles, there are difficulties, which every where beset the cause of education, and render it one which presents to every parent, as well as to every government, considerations for serious attention.

It is a fact, humiliating to our nature, that the mind of man does not, naturally, thirst after knowledge for its own sake, nor is it disposed to seek for it at all, until excited by a thirst for fame, or for the wealth with which its acquisition is supposed to be in some remote way connected; the labor requisite for its possession, and the self-denial which must be practised to obtain it, are repugnant to our natural love of ease, and pleasure—in weaker minds and more animal dispositions, this operates with superior force, and is a most powerful obstruction to the efforts of the preceptor, in conveying instruction to the mind. But were this the only difficulty

presented to the efforts of the teacher to raise the standard of knowledge and education amongst the rising generation of this country, his task would be comparatively light; it is, however, a still more humiliating fact, that there are a vast majority of parents, who either feel no interest in the education of their children whatever, or who prefer expending their resources upon their outward appearance, or in gratifying their desire after pleasure and amusement; and who, from such weak conduct, not only fail to afford a sufficient support to the laborious teacher, either in their countenance, or by placing their children under his care, until their deficiency is so manifest that it becomes humiliating, or they begin to fear the consequences may be injurious to their temporal interests. They then expect, notwithstanding all the difficulties of which they themselves have been the authors, that the teacher should, in a very short space of time, make their children eminent, perfect, and accomplished scholars. Others, again, bring up their children in such a loose, disorderly way, and accustom them to such loose, disobedient, and licentious habits, and conversation, that, instead of respecting the teacher, and paying deference to his authority and instructions, they thwart all his efforts, and render them nugatory by their late and irregular attendance—by their disobedient and refractory conduct, and by their dissipated habits and practices. There is wanting, therefore, in Society, not merely a more general desire for the education of youth, but a more lively and sincere apprehension of that course of discipline and instruction, which is best calculated to produce an enlightened, talented, and energetic community, which it is clear cannot be arrived at under the dictation or guidance of bigotry, or sophism, but must be the offspring of a patriotism which, passing by all minor considerations, regards the human mind as of too great value in its intellectual cultivation to be either starved by neglect, tampered with by irregular attention, or treated as an exotic; and perhaps it will require another century or two of time and disappointment, before such a happy consummation can be arrived at. Then, we may hope that man will become wise by

frequent failures, and, by the bitter experience of another generation or two, will adopt such a national course of physical and mental training, under wise and judicious patriotism, as shall produce a race of intelligent minds in healthy bodies, of which it may be said, as it is said of the ancient Persians, "they taught their youth to ride, to shoot with the bow, and to speak truth;" so in like manner of them, they "taught their youth all that was necessary to qualify them for any station in life—to respect themselves, their teachers, and their parents—to love their Bibles, and to fear and obey God."

The superintendent of education in this section of the Province, has entered upon the task of endeavouring to amalgamate these discordant elements, with a frankness which invites discussion; and his report is so characterized by a zeal, an energy, and a devotedness, that would do honor to any cause, and which are in proof of his being eminently qualified for the station he occupies, that while it denounces in no measured terms the opposition of all who differ from him in opinion, places the question on such a footing, that the public cannot condemn those who analyze it, or the report, with equal frankness, who display an approach to the same zeal, or who express, with some severity, the weakness and the prejudices which he may fail to be conscious of, but which, to them, are therein quite apparent. May I beg the favor therefore, of their indulgence, to notice them in my next, while

I remain,

Faithfully yours,

THE SCHOOL-MASTER ABROAD.

LETTER II.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—Having made a few preliminary remarks on the whole question of popular education, as it now stands, I proceed to notice the Report of the Superintendent, and the Act to which it more especially refers.

Whatever may have been the object of the framers of the Education Act of 1846, it will be universally acknowledged to have been called for by the circumstances of the rising generation in Canada—by the insufficiency of the funds previously provided for the purposes of their Education, and by the imperative necessity there exists, that the population generally should be awakened to a sense of its value and importance—That they should have failed to satisfy most persons, is not to be wondered at, when the conflicting character of the elements with which they had to contend, and the bias under which they were liable to act, are considered; but that they should have so ambiguously worded it as to allow of almost any construction of its clauses; and, under it, have given such almost unlimited and unconstitutional power to those, who, they must have known, would be in danger of abusing them, is a matter for grave and severe reprehension, and justly calculated to excite the keenest suspicions—the most rigid scrutiny, and the most uncompromising hostility; especially when it cannot be concealed, that the Act, by this means, virtually gives the funds, the power, and the influence, into the hands of an order of men who have ever exhibited themselves the determined enemies of civil and religious liberty—the opponents of enlightened and general Education, and the men who thwart and trammel every government which undertakes it—men who but lately have thought popular Education worthy of notice, because they see in it a field in which light would otherwise be sown which would be the death blow to their hopes of supremacy and existence, and one which they

may hope still to envelope in darkness, or shroud with gloom.

The ambiguity of the Act will more conspicuously appear, when it is observed, that it became necessary for the Superintendent to attach a circular to it of greater length, and, apparently, of more authority, than the Act itself, in order to give his own interpretation of its provisions, a circumstance rather anomalous in the history of the acts of a limited form of government. Who ever heard of a money bill passed by the British Parliament, having been accompanied by a long comment from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, explaining and enforcing its clauses? It may be true that *private* instructions have been sent to the proper officers, but this is a different matter from such a dictum as it appears to convey.

The Superintendent very properly insists upon the necessity of a compulsory assessment, for the purpose of raising sufficient funds for the purposes of Education, and the provision of sufficiently talented commissioners and teachers, in order to carry out the object of the Act; but when, in addition to the grants of Government, the large sums raised by an assessment on property, a capitation assessment is also demanded, which does, and will, fall with the greatest weight upon those most disposed to promote the Education of youth, while sums are allowed to be drawn from it over which the people have no control, or knowledge as to whether those sums have been, *bona-fide*, disbursed solely for the purposes of commercial and scientific Education, or not, and when he calls for amendments to an Act which he himself has characterized as a final measure on the subject, and in that call proposes to bring in elements, which we too well know will prove subversive of the very purposes for which they are ostensibly assessed; he must excuse us, I think, if we demur to his demands, and call for a clearer, a more explicit, and a more congenial measure, than the crude and crooked one he has so diligently, and so elaborately concocted, and so ably defended.

If we are to be taxed for education, (or assessed if

he prefers it) it is surely but reasonable, and requisite, that we should have that taxation impartially imposed, equitably administered, and really productive of the purposes for which it is levied; we should know what are the details of the plans, and discipline adopted, and of the expences incurred, and what the course of instruction that will be pursued in the schools; above all, we should be quite convinced, and be shown clearly, that there is no priestcraft, or jesuitism in the business, lest the people be taxed for anything but Education, and lest, by such legislation, they are bound hand and foot, to their own undoing, without the possibility of rescue hereafter through their own present indifference or want of penetration.

The Superintendent has instanced the United States, as an example of the well-working of a compulsory tax for Education, but he has failed to refer, in doing so, to the circumstance of a property tax being that alone which is there imposed, no expense being incurred by the parents, but that of books and stationery; and to the general consent by which a sufficient plan is pursued, solely under Trustees chosen by the people, and by which the priesthood are excluded from all interference with their management. He has not noticed, either, the almost natural consequence that ensues, where the managers are chosen by municipal voters, and which is an objectionable feature, without checks, in his own measure. The teachers are, in some instances, political partizans, selected, without special reference to their professional qualifications; for, although strenuous efforts are often made to exclude such, they will yet creep in. Nor has he referred to their use of the Holy Bible as a reading book, which satisfies the people as to the moral training of their offspring, and enters very largely into the elements which cause the system to work well in that section of our Continent. Deeply sensible that Bible Education is the only sure guarantee for public morals, irrespective of school regulations, and the employment of moral teachers, they declare: "If you would make the rising race as it should be, and what it must be, if

our free institutions are to be preserved, it must be done, and can alone be done by *Christian Education*; in other words—an Education based on the Bible; an Education which shall give the intellect that massive and symmetrical development, which no other book can give, while the conscience and the heart shall be trained by the pure principles, and holy examples, resplendent on its sacred pages. To that Book, emphatically, are we indebted for the great principles of *equal rights*, which forms the foundation of our political edifice, and to that same book we are no less indebted for the influence which shall maintain the edifice unshaken, and firm, upon this solid foundation.”

In this view, they are borne out by late events. In what countries are popular outbreaks characterised by moderation, and subjection to law? Precisely by those where popular education has been founded on the Bible; and on the contrary, wherever this has not been the case,—where the Bible has been rejected, or withheld,—they have been characterised by a cruelty, rapine, and defiance of law and good order, which are truly appalling.

Again, what countries are now the asylums of the oppressed, the refuge of the persecuted, and the exile, and the safeguards of industry and property? Those, and those only, whose popular education has been based on the Word of God.

That this is no prejudiced, or fanatical idea with the citizens of the United States, but a calm and experienced concern for the welfare of their children, and generations yet unborn, may be gathered from their published sentiments; “The Government of this nation,” say they, “is soon to pass into their hands, and with it a moral power, which for good or for evil, will extend to the remotest extremity of our Union. How soon will that Government and that moral power be in the hands of our children? What is to be their education? What their knowledge of their civil rights and duties? What their sense of moral obligation? What their standard of political morality? What their

strength of principle to resist the tendency of freedom to licentiousness? And what the motives that shall give direction to their mighty energies in the mysterious future of our country? are questions of great and fearful interest. To the present active, responsible generation, is committed the decision of these questions. The future is, under Divine Providence, in our hands. It is to be what we shall make it, and we shall make it what we make the present *rising* race, by the power of education. The character of the *risen* race is fixed, and little can be done to change it. This is true *everywhere*, and it is most fearful truth;—our hope is in the next generation. To the children—to the children, then, should all eyes be turned;—on *them* should the energies of benevolence be concentrated, and for them should prayer be continually made.”

There are circumstances in the American system, however, which are equally unfavourable wherever the same causes operate, and which, whenever the assessments upon the inhabitants of Montreal and Quebec shall be enforced, will lead them to wish they had never consented to such a measure. The change of circumstances in the commercial community in the United States, since the bank failures of 1836, has led many owners of property there to the following reasoning, “I am assessed for the support of the Public District Schools, why should I not avail myself of the convenience to have my children educated in them? It is true they cannot obtain so good, or complete an education as at the select schools, academies, or colleges, but I cannot afford the expence of both, and must bend to circumstances.” An effort has been made to raise the character of the schools, to satisfy such citizens, which has been generally successful, but what has been the consequence?—a moral injury has been inflicted, which the difference in cost can never repair—the children of parents who have paid sedulous attention to their moral and polite training, have been brought into constant contact with those

whose training has been in a great measure, if not totally, neglected, by rude, ignorant, and depraved citizens, and thus have acquired habits of immorality, and licentiousness, which have resulted either in the overthrow and subjugation of the teacher's authority, where that could be effected, or in their future resistance to parental control, commercial restriction, and even to the just and necessary authority of law. From this source of licentiousness, we need not be surprised at the instances of it, which every day's history presents, and which is alike painful and alarming to the quiet citizen, and the patriotic philanthropist.

But this is a favourite part of the Superintendent's scheme, who conceives, thereby, the idea of amalgamating the races in this Province. To a certain extent, and under some modifications, this is indeed desirable, but what reflecting citizen, who wishes his children to become respectable in society by their acquisition of knowledge, and by their moral and intellectual training, would feel at liberty to allow them to mingle indiscriminately with those of the community at large, a prey alike to the influence of evil example, and the subtleties and sophisms of the dark ages, or, in addition to the employment of those instructors whose services are congenial to his wishes, and which he finds himself straitened to remunerate, to be obliged to contribute towards the education of others, from which he can derive but an incidental advantage.

The Superintendent, it is true, proposes a relief in the discretionary power given to the Commissioners, but this is only an "*raframentum ad captandum*," for every one can see how this power would leave room for continued and increasing abuse, as will be shown in these pages. The Superintendent also, in his 6th exposition of the defects of the present law, proposes to obtain power to compel the corporations of towns to pay the sum required by law, to the Secretary or Treasurer of the School Commissioners, which would have the immediate effect I record, as exhibited in the United States District Schools, but without the ame-

liorating circumstances there experienced, and particularly in Montreal and Quebec. Requesting a further patient hearing,

I remain,

Fellow-Citizens,

Faithfully yours,

THE SCHOOL-MASTER ABROAD.

Can't you see it is without
seeing the Act

LETTER III.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—It would occupy too much of your time and mine, to wade through all the verbose and lengthy Report of the Superintendent; I shall therefore simply conduct you through the Sections of the Act, and his proposed amendments of it, which are to engage the attention, occupy the discussion, and call for the decision of the Provincial Legislature, at its approaching Session; when your doom to endure all the evils which then may be inflicted will be sealed, unless you wake up to consider its provisions, detect its treachery, and resist its tyranny; earnestly requesting you, however, to peruse the whole of the Act and Report for yourselves.

The School Act of 1846 commences by a blow at your independence, in the establishment of Common Schools under Commissioners in the cities of Montreal and Quebec, through its authority; when already sufficient provision is made by endowed and independent schools for the education of its inhabitants; and the Superintendent, finding they cannot be legally compelled to submit to this capitation tax, proposes in his amendments to obtain power to effect it.

The second clause compels you, whenever this shall be accomplished, to submit to be governed by the municipal authorities in all matters connected with the Education of your children; and you are already aware, from the unsatisfactory character of their proceedings in other Municipal affairs, what you have to expect.

The third clause, and the amendment itself, is innocent enough, for if the people will not look after their own affairs, it is but just they should be punished, after the example of the frogs and King Log.

The fourth clause lacks a compulsory clause, requiring a sufficient advertisement of the meetings which is to commit them to the tender mercies of the School Commissioners, and ought to be so constructed as peremptorily to require that advertisement being posted 14 days,

at least, on every Public House, Inn, Post-Office, or place of Public Religious Worship, or of Business, in the Municipality; else, as has already been the case, a coterie of political or religious partizans get up a snug, silent public meeting, and comfortably vote themselves into the power of tyrannizing over, and fleecing the people.

The eighth clause should have enacted, also, that no Minister of the Gospel, or Priest, or other ecclesiastical functionary, should, under any circumstances, be a School Commissioner. 9657

The eleventh clause ought to require the public posting, by the Chairman of the Commissioners, of a copy of the said return in every public place in the Municipality, for 14 days before making it to the Superintendent of Schools.

The twelfth section gives too much irresponsible power to the Superintendent of Schools, whose position is already sufficiently anomalous and unconstitutional, and should have empowered the Provincial Secretary, by order from the Governor in Council.

The thirteenth section is superseded by the former, but ought, imperatively, to require the Superintendent, or Provincial Secretary, to appoint, subject to the veto of the Governor in Council, as recommended, that recommendation excluding all Ministers of Religion or Priests.

The sixteenth section ought to have provided sufficient time for objections by the rate-payers to the Municipal appointments, and so have prevented any evil consequences which might arise from a precipitate use of powers improperly acquired, by allowing the expiration of fourteen days instead of seven, before the functions of the Commissioners, &c., commenced.

The nineteenth section ought to have fixed a maximum, as well as a minimum, to the number of children taught in each school, to prevent too great a number being crowded into one Schoolroom, to the great injury of their health, morals, and education, and the serious injury of the Teacher, except in the case of a sufficiently roomy and well ventilated Schoolroom being provided;

and the education of the children by monitors, a plan as yet in its infancy in this Province.

The twentieth section is too ambiguous, and gives to Commissioners the power of political and religious chicanery, to prevent dissentients from receiving the benefits of the Act.

113. The third clause of the fourth section should be so amended, to prevent the grants of money, therein allowed, from being made, unless such Model and Common Schools are to be conducted on a system of instruction and discipline, laid down by the Governor in Council, and should provide an allowance for the separate erection of Schoolhouses for girls, apart from the boys. The fifth clause evidently opens a wide field for the operation of religious tyranny, bigotry and intrigue, and ought not to have been introduced at all, as the public are not taxed for religious instruction, nor are the children sent to the schools for that end, but to receive elementary instruction in Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English and French Grammar, and Geography; studies, which, if properly attended to, will more than fill up their time at school. The sixth clause wants a proviso of appeal to the Superintendent of Schools, and the Provincial Secretary, in the event of dissatisfaction with the decision of the Commissioners.

The seventh clause ought to authorize the Commissioners to visit the Schools at all times, and require each of them to visit them once in six months, and to record their visit and report the same in a book to be kept by the Teacher for that purpose, a copy of which should be transmitted to the Superintendent of Schools.

The eighth clause ought to contain a proviso, that the orders or instructions by the Superintendent should have the authority of the Governor in Council, as a check upon improper dictation or domination.

The ninth clause should have stated the place where, as well as the time when, the proceedings of the Commissioners may be examined; and might have named the house or office of the Chairman for that purpose.

The eleventh clause ought to have prescribed what constitutes a Model School, else £20 per annum may

be drawn to patronize some favourite School of the Superintendent's, or some other party, which has really no title to any such claim. A Model School should be on the Bell or Lancasterian plan, and be required to teach the higher branches in both languages, having a discipline and course of education prescribed by the Governor and Council, and published by their authority.

It must be quite evident, on the most cursory survey of the twelfth clause, that by far too large a discretionary power is committed to the Commissioners, in reference to the fees to be charged; a license is thereby given to the most unjust and tyrannical distinctions, and to the practice of every political and Municipal wrong. The fees ought to be laid at 1s 3d per month as the maximum, and the lower rates to be dependent solely upon the course of instruction pursued by the pupil; fixing 2s 6d as the maximum in Model Schools, and a corresponding reduction ending with 6d per month. In reference to this clause, the amendment of the Superintendent is a good one, but does not embrace all that is necessary.

The thirteenth clause requires, also, a proviso to guard against imposition in the case of indigent persons, who should be required to bring a magistrate's certificate, that they are so.

The fifteenth ought to require that the managers obtained should not be ecclesiastics, and that they should be unpaid Assistants; all others coming under the denomination of servants, for whose pay a return is required to the Superintendent of Education.

The twenty-fourth section evidently requires a proviso, that the Commissioners of Schools shall not alienate property, without authority from the Governor in Council; for, as it at present stands, the Superintendent of Schools "*suo autoritate*," may enable a School Corporation to do so.

The twenty-fifth section demands the condition, that any Fabrique Schools united to Common Schools, should, in every respect, be the same as to their government, and management, or the door is at once opened to religious fraud and collusion.

The twenty-sixth section is the most ambiguously worded, and, perhaps, the most objectionable, of all the clauses of this Act; inasmuch as, while it professes to accommodate persons of different religious denominations, it is liable to all manner of misconstruction and abuse. No clearer proof of this can be exhibited than in the case of the people of Chambly, which is, indeed, only a sample of the evils it is, as at present worded, calculated to produce.

*Very deserving
if true*

Being dissatisfied with the character of the education provided for their children, or, as they understood the section, "the regulations and arrangements made by the School Commissioners" there, not offering such an Education as they desired, and required, a few of them met together, and gave such notice, and performed all such other acts, as entitled them, from a fair construction of this and the 27th section, as Dissentients, to a share of the School Fund for the Municipality; expecting, of course, that it would be complied with. The Commissioners of the Schools, (put in in the snug manner already alluded to) being partly Roman Catholics, and partly Episcopalians, had united, as the majority of the inhabitants are Roman Catholics, and the next majority, Episcopalians, to establish one School District, and appoint, jointly, two schools;—one for Protestant children, and the other for the children of Roman Catholics. Into the one, because it is the property of the Rector, have been crowded boys and girls to the number of upwards of 100, though it is too small to accommodate more than half that number; and here they have been compelled—in addition to their other learning, of which, from the number, it was frequently complained, they received but little—to learn the Church Catechism; while French Canadian children, sent there to learn English, have been withdrawn by the Priest, because the master would not teach them the Romish Catechism, and other books. The other, for the French Canadians, was unsuitable in every respect. The Dissentients, understanding the section as it is worded, being Protestants, and differing, consequently, from the majority in faith, as they under-

stood that term, though it is, by the bye, a most ambiguous one, and should be altered to that of "religious denomination," gave the required notice, on that ground, and on the ground of being dissatisfied with the regulations of the Commissioners for the Education of children, having engaged suitable Teachers competent to instruct in every branch of Education. The Dissident School was well attended by Protestant children of every denomination, because no Catechism was taught in it, and the Bible without note alone read, and even by some French and English Canadians, anxious to obtain a superior English Education, whose parents expressed an unqualified approval of the Teachers and the management of the School. Judge, then, of the astonishment of these Dissidents, after they had complied with every requisition of the Act, and had gone to considerable extra expense, in order to obtain the best Education for their children, and others in the Municipality; when they applied for the portion of the School Fund to which they were justly entitled, to be informed, after a good deal of unnecessary delay, that as a particular denomination of Dissidents, they had no right to claim for children of other denominations; and that having thrown out all such, there did not remain the number of children for whom the Act empowered them to make any claim. Now, in order to show the arrogance and injustice of this arbitrary construction of the clause, it must be observed, in the first place, that the Dissidents claimed on the ground of difference in faith, from the majority, who had established the District Schools, being Roman Catholics; and secondly, that the Commissioners took upon them not only to declare that parents, who were Episcopalians, were not Dissidents, and, consequently, agreeable to the Act, were not Protestants; but that many of the parents were Episcopalians by surmise merely, who only casually attended the church service, and, consequently, that they claimed their children as not belonging to the Dissidents. In the third place, it will be seen what little chance Dissidents have, under such ambiguously

worded clauses, and jesuitical working of Acts professing to benefit the people, when the faiths, or churches, or denominations, or whatever else you please to call them, who have the presumption or impiety to claim every drunkard, or swearer, or impious person, no matter what his moral character, with all his posterity, good, bad, and indifferent, as members of the church of Christ; and on that specious ground, endow them with all State and Municipal privileges, are enabled to exclude those denominations, who, more consistently, and Scripturally, claim only those who are really communicants, of acceptable moral character. On appeal to the Superintendent, it was evident he took the same view as the Commissioners, if he was not the director of their movements, for he justified all their proceedings, and with a warmth which made him almost appear as a partizan; he argued that the term Protestant was too vague a term—that there were all sorts of Protestants—Mormon Protestants and Millerite Protestants, &c. &c., so that the Dissentients should have expressed exactly what denomination of Protestants they were, and could only claim for the children of that class, and of those persons in that class who signed the notice and made the declaration; forgetting that the same objection would apply to Roman Catholics, who are also divided into Ronge Catholics, Czerski Catholics, Guistiniani Catholics, Gallican Catholics, “*et multis aliis*,” as equally opposed to one another as any body of Protestants in existence. When reminded that the Dissentients had fully complied with the wording of the Act, and that it was so ambiguously worded that it might be stretched like caoutchouc, he insisted that was his construction, and that of the Commissioners. The Commissioners, therefore, afterwards proceeded, by law, to enforce their demands upon the Dissentients for the Capitation Tax upon their children, which amounted to a considerable sum, as the families were large, and had been assessed at the full rates. They, conceiving themselves most unjustly oppressed, under the authority of this Act, appealed to the Court in Montreal, but, understanding the Superintendent to

promise that he would reconsider the claim, if a fresh return were made, it was withdrawn, and the new returns were accordingly made. Having, however, given up all hope of redress, and conceiving there was no remedy, if the sections of the Act might be so construed, but such as the united efforts of the Protestant inhabitants of the Province could effect by an amendment of the Act, they had ceased to comply with its requisitions, seeing in it nothing but a splendid public deception; so that when they had made the return afresh, the Superintendent turned round upon them and stated, that the Act could not have a retro-active effect, and that as the Commissioners had now spent all the School Funds in their hands, and the Dissentients had since neglected to make the returns in proper time, there was now no remedy—though he admitted an allowance should have been made for their children. A further and more aggravated circumstance, connected with this case, occurred, which equally shows how this jesuitically worded Act may be misconstrued, in almost any way. The Dissentients had in their School, or Academy, several children of parents in Montreal and other placas, for whom they made a return and claim, on what they deemed a fair construction of the clauses of the 29th section, which the Superintendent threw out because he construes the clause to apply to Schools in the same Municipality only.

Here, then, are a number of intelligent Protestant inhabitants of a country Municipality, anxious to give their children the best education they can procure, and equally anxious to extend its benefits to others, at some extra expense to themselves, excluded by the arbitrary misconstruction of several ambiguously worded sections of this Act to promote the cause of education, wronged and oppressed by those whom the Act empowers to promote its apparently beneficial objects, and obliged to give up the employment of their own teachers, and submit to the imperfect provision of the School Commissioners. It has been well remarked, that "the welfare of a people is less promoted by good laws, than by the justice, disinterestedness, and

“fidelity of those who execute them.” The Superintendent, in page 83 of his Report, recommends an important alteration in the powers of dissentient trustees, which, however, he appears to have already neutralized, by the amendment he proposes in page 80, which is to authorise him to refuse to receive a report from School Commissioners, who have not been approved by three visitors, which visitors are by Sec. 33, first, *clergymen or priests*, who are not likely to report favourably of schools they have no religious communion with. It is clear then, that before this Act can be made safe or satisfactory to Protestants, the 26th sec. should be freed from all ambiguity, and more clearly define the duties and privileges of dissentients, there being no safety for them as it, with the 27th and 29th, stand at present.

The 30th section ought to be made imperative, except that all Girls’ Schools, established by religious communities, should be considered as dissentient Schools, and subject to the same regulations, visitations, and control; else, the Protestant inhabitants are called upon to support Schools of a very questionable description, in which anything but an intelligent education, suited to the common affairs of life, is communicated.

The 31st section makes evidently too uncertain an allowance to the Secretary-Treasurer, and one liable to great abuse. It might very beneficially be altered to a certain amount, dependent upon the number of children, and the expences to be under the control of the Commissioners, only such as are allowed by them being to be paid out of the School fund.

The 32d section should prescribe the visits quarterly, and make them compulsory, under a penalty.

The 33d section is a most important one, because it proposes such an oversight of the Schools as shall satisfy the public that they are so conducted, as to answer the purposes for which they are assessed;—and, first, in order to remove all suspicion and apprehension from the minds of the people, should absolutely exclude all priests and ministers of religion, the schools

not being established for the purposes of religion, but of social and commercial education. It proceeds upon the supposition of their being *by consequence* the most eligible, which is, *de facto*, not the case; many of them being, neither by education nor position, at all suitable. It ought to exclude the first clause, and so to enact it as in the second clause.

Second clause as is enacted by the third.

Third as by the fourth.

Fifthly, it should appoint Notaries Public and Advocates.

Sixthly as fifthly, with an addition of all the other members of the Municipal Council.

Seventh, in addition to the Militia Officers, every inhabitant assessed to a certain amount, say £5, for education.

The powers conferred upon the Superintendent of Schools are so extensive, and of such an irresponsible character, that it is evident they ought not to be administered by a single individual. Here we have a Roman Catholic Superintendent, in the Lower Province, superintending and administering funds to Protestant Schools; and in the Upper Province, a Protestant Superintendent, superintending and administering funds to Roman Catholic Schools, at salaries twofold greater than those paid in the United States to those whose labours are more extensive and continued, and with privileges much more responsible and circumscribed; this section ought therefore to be amended, to appoint a Protestant and Roman Catholic Superintendent for the Lower Province, and a Roman Catholic and Protestant for the Upper, at half the salaries, having only one clerk each, and being required in turns to travel round and pay monthly visits to the Schools, as general visitors. As it is at present, the Superintendent has only a boy as clerk, without a secretary, so that his salary is actually £675 per annum, justifying fully the clamorous opposition he makes against the appointment of any other officer but himself. The 34th section, therefore, should be

amended to appoint two Superintendents for each section of the Province.

The third clause of the thirty-fifth section should confine the printing of advice and recommendations by the Superintendents, to the School Commissioners and others, to such merely as are sanctioned by the Governor in Council, or by his order and authority, else the education fund is burdened with the expense of printing any wordy document, of doubtful authority. The sixth clause should require the reports of visitors of the different Schools to be presented in addition, that an effectual check may be kept upon the Superintendent and Commissioners.

The thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sections should be amended to grant no further privilege in demands upon property than are accorded to other creditors, as some propositions in reference to it, from the Superintendent, assume a very arbitrary, feudal, and barbarous character.

The proposed amendment of the thirty-seventh section, in page 80 of the Report, is so glaring an effort to supply and circulate religious books, at the expense of the public, that it should meet with the most powerful resistance, and it should be left to the School Commissioners of the Municipalities to procure Libraries out of their surplus funds, consisting solely of scientific and artistical works, or histories and travels. Promising to conclude in my next,

I remain,

Fellow-Citizens,

Faithfully yours,

THE SCHOOL-MASTER ABROAD.

LETTER IV.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,—The amendment to the Act proposed in page 80, of the Superintendent's Report, will evidently give the Commissioners too much power in reference to interference with the Municipal valuation roll, by enabling them, in fact, to fix whatever valuation they please upon property, besides incidentally bringing them into constant, and probably vexatious conflict with the Municipal Corporations.

It is matter of surprise, that the inhabitants of Montreal and Quebec should ever have allowed the fortiet section to pass the Legislature without the most strenuous resistance, but still more, that they should have offered none whatever, and can only be accounted for by that strange infatuation which sometimes makes men's thoughts to "lose the name of action" under the impression that "every one's business is no one's," inasmuch as it imposes upon them also a capitation tax, which, where families of children are large, would amount to £4 or £5 per eight months in the year, equal to the charge by independent teachers in the city for the complete education of one child for one complete year; a tax, which, in addition to the present expense of education, would be wholly insupportable by many families, and would lead to all the deplorable consequences experienced in the United States, by families being compelled to place their children in company with the rough, rude, and licentious of every description. The power to enforce this clause would at once take away the means of support from those independent and properly qualified teachers, in whom the public have confidence, and cause them to remove from the city, which would leave the parents of children in those cities no other alternative but to send them to the very questionably managed Municipal Schools it would establish, or to the High School, whose charges they could not afford. The framers of the Act evidently expected more than they were able

to accomplish, for it now appears from the recommendation in page 82 of the Report, that they have not had powers to obtain more from the Municipal Corporations of Montreal and Quebec, than the property tax for education, previously levied, which is at present incorporated in their other Municipal rates, else why this application for new powers, if those already in existence had been sufficient, and for a special retention of Municipal rates on public houses, &c., for this express purpose? The independent teachers of the Province have been called upon by one of their body, to sign a petition to the Legislature against this clause, but have not as yet responded to the call, probably from an undue confidence in the resistance it will meet with by the Corporation of those cities. When, however, it is recollected into what political hands the management of their funds have and are continually passing, there is every reason to fear they will find their confidence has been misplaced, and that they have erred in allowing private feelings to prevent them from attending to a common interest.

The forty-third clause clearly shows that the framers of the Act anticipated an easy victory, in the taxation of the inhabitants of Quebec and Montreal, and to save the Commissioners the trouble of contesting the matter with a number of men too intelligent to be deceived by the provisions of the Act, they have proposed by it to tie the Corporation neck and heels, and leave them to contend with private individuals, who might place obstacles in the way. Should the Legislature feel disposed to listen to these suggestions of the Superintendent, the only remedy the inhabitants of Montreal, Quebec and elsewhere, have, is to require a clause to exempt from the capitation tax, the parents of children who exhibit to the collector, or the Commissioners, a duly authenticated certificate of their children receiving instruction from some independent male or female teacher.

The forty-fourth section is too singular in its construction to be passed over in silence, for it takes away a large share of the benefit the inhabitants of those

cities might have anticipated; and, while they would be taxed for amounts sufficient to endow all the Schools in the city, they must have only a meagre share of the returns; the injustice would be more seriously felt too in the case of the Protestants, as being the most wealthy, they would be taxed to the full amount, while the Roman Catholics would be excused, by the powers vested in the Commissioners, from the largest share of it; and thus, irritation, sufficiently excited already by the intrigues of Priests and Jesuits, would be fanned into an unquenchable flame.

The forty-sixth clause might very beneficially be altered, that all surplus monies should be employed in establishing School Libraries in every village, under the sole control of the Commissioners. The amendment to the forty-ninth section should contain a proviso, that all such grants should be on the application of the the School Commissioners of any District, by petition and statement of the need for such grants,—such grant to be only by order of the Governor in Council—otherwise the Superintendent would have the power to assist parties no way connected with the cause of general Education in the Province, and the establishment of libraries for the propagation of some favourite dogma, rather than that of general information and science.

You will at once perceive the necessity for the Boards of Examiners of candidates for Teachers, established by the fiftieth section, being obliged to conduct their examinations jointly, and not separately, in order to preserve a proper check upon the admission of incompetent Teachers. All the other clauses of this section are unexceptionable, except the tenth, which is of too jesuitical a character to be overlooked. Independent of other considerations which might be named, why, I ask, should any Priest, Minister, or female, when they seek to become such, any more than any other Teacher, be exempt from an examination fraught with such important consequences, when it is well known how frequently “mitred heads lay careless hands on skulls that cannot teach and will not learn,” and that the most incompe-

tent females often undertake the important duty of teachers of youth ?

The amendment proposed in page 83 of the Report, is well enough, as to the powers of the Board, if they be jointly exercised in the designation and approval of books, provided they be confined to those suitable for the purposes of Education, and not of what he designates morality and religion, with which, at Common Schools, they have properly nothing to do. The fifty-fifth section has hitherto served no good purpose, as has been proved in the unfortunate Chambly case, where, instead of "a large beneficial and liberal construction, as would best insure the attainment of the objects of the Act," a very narrow, and most injurious and illiberal construction has been made of its provisions, and calculated totally to prevent the attainment of its professed objects.

The fifty-first section establishes a Property Qualification for Commissioners of £250 currency per annum, to the operation of which, the Superintendent strongly objects, on the ground that in many Municipalities there are not a sufficient number of persons thus qualified, or that have sufficient educational qualifications; and he, therefore, proposes to alter this section, and to admit persons, as Commissioners, on the ground of their being educated. Now, however plausible this objection may be, when taken in connexion with the amendment he proposes, I hesitate not to warn you, that it is fraught with the greatest danger to your civil and religious liberties, and ought to call forth from you the loudest reprobation. When it is known that, at this moment, there is taking place a large immigration of those Jesuits who have been banished from France, and driven away because of their opposition to liberal Education, and their insidious efforts to undermine and subvert the liberties of the people, it is surely a time for suspicion and caution. Here they have taken refuge; and here they are seeking a congenial field for their insidious policy and operations; and what can be more favourable, or opportune, than the one the Superintendent proposes to open before, and present to them. Give but the Romish Priests, and the Jesuits,

the powers of School Commissioners, under this Act, and you poison the very sources of Education, by giving it into the hands of those whose object has ever been to darken, rather than to illuminate the human mind. Instead, therefore, of there being "no amendments of the Law to recommend, as more important or necessary, than those required to remove the qualification in property," and substitute one of Education, there is none which can be more strenuously urged upon Protestants to maintain inviolate than this one, as it secures, in the hands of the people, the management of Education, instead of surrendering their rights to the tender mercies of Priestcraft. Let it be your care, Fellow-Citizens, to have it confirmed, and well guarded by an alteration of the section to a Property qualification of £100 per annum *merely*; that being alone sufficient to secure what is wanted, and remove the objection.

The Superintendent, in addition to a long tirade about the importance of Academic robes, sashes, coat seams, and other childish baubles, as though they could instil knowledge, or furnish brains for learning and teaching, has a long comment, in his Report, on the necessity of having the co-operation of the clergy in the cause of Education; but this only shows that he is not sensible of the prejudices under which he writes and acts, and that, enlightened as his mind certainly is on many points, he is yet under the penumbra of the dark ages, in mixing up Education with religion, and in supposing that the cause of the former is necessarily connected with the latter. He has yet to see the advantage of apportioning to each its appropriate sphere. He has yet to discover that in those countries in which the clergy have most to do with Education, the people are the least educated; while in those where they have the least to do with education, the people are the most intelligent, and well informed. The fact is, in such, the Schoolmaster and the minister occupy their appropriate spheres;—the one during the week toils in "teaching the young idea how to shoot," with or without the Bible; the other, on the Sabbath, surrounded by his zealous and faithful flock, devotes

himself to the important work of Sabbath School instruction; and thus both succeed in training intelligent, moral, and religiously loyal subjects of the British Empire; while, wherever the clergy interfere with the just rights of the people, in the important work of Education, all is confusion, discord, dissatisfaction and retrogression. Let it be your care, my Protestant Fellow-Citizens, to prevent this, as far as possible, by your strenuous opposition to all such attempts.

I write strongly, because the time is come when we can no longer tamper with the insidious attempts now made to overthrow our liberties, and be either safe, or blameless. The tocsin is sounding throughout Europe—let us not be the last to hear and understand its import; all that is valuable to us is now at stake; let not our liberties fall under the insidious cloak of an Education Act, cries, Fellow-Citizens,

Your faithful humble Servant,

THE SCHOOL-MASTER ABROAD.

December, 1848.

ac-
no-
re ;
hta
all
on.
, to
osi.

we
ow
, or
e—
ort ;
our
tion

the
and
had
a lo
the
tion
pre
light
yet
Edm
of
the
is
those
Edm
those
the
The
occ
we
with
surch